Commonwealth of Dominica

Office of the Maritime Administrator

TO: **ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

SUBJECT: **Ballast Water Management Plans**

REFERENCE:
(a) Assembly Resolution A.868 (20) dated 28 November 1997
(b) Assembly Resolution A.774 (18)
(c) MSC/MEPC Circ. 288 dated 10 May 1995
(d) MEPC/Circ. 217 dated 24 May 1989

PURPOSE: **This Circular recommends the application of the IMO "Guidelines for Preventing the Introduction of Unwanted Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens from Ships' Ballast Water and Sediment Discharges" and the establishment of a Ballast Water Management Plan aboard vessels in the Dominica International Registry. These efforts should help to prevent the uncontrolled discharge of ballast water containing unwanted aquatic organisms and pathogens, thus minimizing the risk of their unwanted transfer and establishment in other locations.**

This Circular also informs ship owners, vessel operators and masters that the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee of International Maritime Organization is expected to recommend the adoption of a new Annex to MARPOL that, among other things, will provide directions to port State authorities. In some locations (the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway for example), however, ballast water and sediment discharge controls are already in place. The Government of Australia has announced that as of 1 July 2001 all international ships calling in Australia must exchange ballast water at sea, utilize equivalent on-board treatment systems, or use the new Australian ballast water Decision Support System' to provide detailed information to the Australian Quarantine Service.

APPLICABILITY: **This Circular applies to all Ship owners, Operators, Masters and Officers of Merchant Ships, Agents and Recognized Organizations, except Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODU's).**

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular should be directed to the Deputy Maritime Administrator
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REQUIREMENTS:

1.0 Recognition and Response

1.1 The Commonwealth of Dominica realizes that there is growing worldwide concern for the unplanned and unwanted introduction of harmful aquatic organisms, ballast water-transported disease bacteria and viruses, and their effects on human health, the marine environment, fisheries, aquaculture and amenities.

1.2 The proposed ballast water and sediment discharge control regulations strongly encourage port State authorities to provide information to vessel owners, operators and masters regarding any ballast water and sediment management requirements.

1.3 The Administration recommends that ship owners, operators and masters become familiar with the requirements of port State authorities regarding ballast water and sediment management and control procedures relative to the vessel's ports of call, including information that will be needed to obtain clearance.

1.4 While the Administration recognizes that the complete prevention of the introduction of unwanted aquatic organisms and pathogens through ballast water may not be possible at this time, it is generally accepted that much can be done to minimize the risks and accordingly the focus should be on this aspect.

1.5 The Administration, therefore, strongly recommends that all Owners and Masters apply the appropriate provisions of the "Guidelines for Preventing the Introduction of Unwanted Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens from Ships' Ballast Water and Sediment Discharge" found in reference (a) or in the appropriate port State guidelines.

1.6 Classification Societies are urged to include provisions for ballast water exchange and sediment discharge system design and procedures in their rule requirements provided to the ship's master and also information necessary for inclusion in the ship's Stability Booklet.

2.0 IMO Guidance on Safety Aspects of Ballast Water Exchange at Sea

Ship's masters and officers involved in ballast water exchange at sea are strongly encouraged to read this guidance, and to work with the vessel owners and operators to ensure that the vessel specific instructions are accurate and reflect the safety aspects identified in the Guidance document.

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3.0 Ballast Water Management Plans

3.1 Such plans, as recommended in reference (a) above, should be incorporated into ships' operational manuals for the guidance of the ships' crews and should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- ballast water loading and discharging procedures and precautions;
- ballast water and sediment sampling and testing;
- controls applied by Port State Authorities;
- reporting and information requirements;
- exchange and treatment options or requirements;
- crew safety guidelines;
- sediment disposal arrangements; and
- crew education and training.

3.2 The Model Ballast Water Management Plan published by the International Chamber of Shipping is recommended by the Administration.

4.0 Ship Operation Manuals

4.1 Ship operation manuals should include reference to the IMO Guidelines and to the need to comply with any ballast water and sediment discharge procedures imposed by port State Authorities. Responsibility for deciding on the appropriate ballast water and sediment removal actions to be made rests with the Master, taking into account prevailing safety, stability and structural factors and influence at the time as emphasized in the IMO safety guidance circular referred to in reference (b) above.

4.2 Where a port State authority requests or requires that specific ballast water procedures and or treatment option(s) be undertaken and, due to weather, sea conditions or operational impracticability such action can not be taken, the master should report this fact to the port State Authority as soon as possible and where appropriate prior to entering seas under the jurisdiction of said port State,

4.3 To facilitate the administration of ballast water management and treatment procedures on board, a responsible officer should be appointed to maintain records and to ensure ballast water management and or treatment procedures are followed and accurately recorded.

4.4 When loading ballast, every effort should be made to ensure that only clean ballast water is being taken on and that the uptake of sediment with the ballast water is minimized. Where practicable, ships should endeavor to avoid taking on ballast water in shallow water areas, or in the vicinity of dredging operations, to reduce the likelihood that the water will contain silt, which may harbor the cysts of unwanted aquatic organisms and pathogens, and to otherwise reduce the probability that unwanted aquatic organisms and

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pathogens are present in the water. Whenever practicable, areas should be avoided as a source of ballast where there is a known outbreak of diseases, communicable through ballast water, or in which phytoplankton blooms are occurring.

4.5 When taking on ballast water, records of the dates, geographical locations, salinity and amount of ballast water taken on should be recorded in the ship's logbook. A report similar in format to that shown in attachments A to this Circular should be completed by the ship's master or the responsible officer, as appropriate, so that ballast information can be made available to Port State Authorities when requested or required.

4.6. Whenever possible, the samples used to determine the salinity of ballast water loaded on board should be obtained from the ballast tanks themselves or from a supply piping tap. Surface seawater samples should not be taken as indicative of the water in the ballast tanks since seawater salinity may vary significantly with the depth of water alongside the ship.

4.7. Subject to accessibility, all sources of sediment retention such as anchors, cables, chain lockers and suction wells should be cleaned routinely to reduce the possibility of spreading contamination. Where sediment samples are required necessitating entry into tank spaces, great care should be taken to ensure the safety of those personnel assigned to take the samples.

5.0 Training

Training for ship's masters and crews as appropriate should include instructions on the application of ballast water and sediment management and treatment procedures. Instruction also should be provided on the maintenance of appropriate records and logs.

6.0 United States Coast Guard Instructions for Ballast Water Reporting Form

The United States has implemented ballast water management requirements on vessels operating in the Great Lakes and Hudson River for several years. These regulations are published in 33 CFR, Part 151, Subpart C. New ballast water related requirements, which came into force on 1 July 1999, have been published in 33 CFR, Part 151, Subpart D. These new regulations require the owner or operator of a vessel with ballast tanks, entering United States waters from outside its EEZ, to submit a report to the Coast Guard documenting shipboard ballast water management practices. The report must be submitted to the Coast Guard before the vessel departs the first port of call in waters of the United States. Attachment C contains the reporting form and instructions. The regulations state that these reporting requirements also may be satisfied by the submission of the "Ballast Water Reporting Form" contained in Assembly Resolution

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A.868 (20) or by the submission of the St. Lawrence Seaway required "Pre-entry Information Flagged Vessels Form."

7.0 Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes Reporting Procedures

Attachment D is a MEPC/Circ.217 dated 24 May 1989, containing the Guidelines on procedures to be followed in respect to Ballast Water for ships proceeding thru the St. Lawrence Seaway and to the Great Lakes. All Dominica registered ships are urged to comply large-scale non-compliance could result in the application of regulatory controls.

8.0 Australia's New Mandatory Ballast Water Requirements

From 1 July 2001, international ships calling in Australia must exchange ballast water at sea, utilize equivalent on-board treatment systems, or use the new Australian ballast water Decision Support System to provide the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) with details of ballast water uptake and intended discharge. A copy of the AQIS brochure may be accessed at www.aqis.gov.au/docs/ballast/bwbroch.pdf.

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ATTACHMENT A

A 18/Res.774
ANNEX
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BALLAST WATER CONTROL REPORT FORM

(To be completed by ship's Master prior to arrival and provided to Port State Authority upon request.)

NAME OF SHIP:

PORT OF REGISTRY:

OFFICIAL NO. OR CALL SIGN:

OWNERS/OPERATORS:

AGENT:

IMO GUIDELINES CARRIED? YES ☐ NO ☐

CONTROL ACTION TAKEN?

- ☐ Non-release of ballast
- ☐ Ballast water exchange
- ☐ Ballast water management practices
- ☐ Use of shore reception facilities
- ☐ Other (specify)

- ☐ Nil

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